


REMARKS

Applicants request reconsideration of the above-mentioned application in view of the foregoing amendments and following discussion.

1. The Examiner is thanked for the courtesies extended during the telephone conference on 4 February 2004 with Attorneys John M. Manion and Laura A. Dable, during which proposed claim amendments relative the Roberts (1,927,849) reference were discussed.
2. In the present office action, claims 1 – 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Roberts. Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 10, and 15 to more distinctly claim the feature of the bowed shaft. Specifically claims 1, 10, and 15 now include the feature of the shaft being bowed along its longitudinal axis. No new matter has been added. This feature is neither shown nor claimed in the Roberts reference. In contrast, the Roberts reference discloses companion shafts angularly related, with associated ends connected together by universal joint 14 (see lines 58 – 72). The companion shafts disclosed in Roberts form an angle at a specific point, namely universal joint 14. This is unlike the shaft of the present claim that is continuously bowed along its longitudinal axis. Accordingly, it is asserted that independent claims 1, 10, and 15, as amended present patentable material and avoid the Roberts reference. Claims 2 – 5, 11 – 14, and 16 – 18 depend from amended independent claims believed allowable, and as such are also believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 6 – 9, inclusive have been cancelled.

Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be removed, that amended claims 1, 10, and 15 and claims 2 – 5, inclusive, 11 – 14, inclusive, and 16 – 18, inclusive, be passed to allowance.

Respectfully Submitted,

By 
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